

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



264 Controlling the Narrative is a Leader's Job

Watching how public discussions evolve with major issues, I am reminded how leaders, just about all leaders in the public and private sectors, might be viewing their main job in today's society. We'll chew that over a bit, today on The Extra Point.

If you follow the national news you know that Amazon pulled out of discussions with New York leaders to set up their second headquarters in that city. Liberal politicians, most notably New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, had led the resistance against the massive retailer and celebrated the fact that Amazon chose against New York.

In the aftermath, she and others have been roundly criticized for losing 25,000 jobs for residents and billions of dollars in revenues for the state. Conservatives hammered her with billboards, blaming her directly, and social media has been on fire since Amazon made its decision. So you might think she's wounded politically by the outcry from New York residents, who lost out on those jobs. That's what I would have thought.

Then I watched a Fox News show where a handful of conservative commentators said she is actually winning the public argument, and what it comes down to is she has taken control of the narrative. While the battle is not won she has convinced a growing majority of city residents that those jobs Amazon was lining up was a great deal for the biggest company in the world owned by the richest man in the world — but was a bad deal for the people of New York. More New Yorkers believe her than believe her opponents. At least at this moment, she owns the narrative, which was acknowledged by the Fox discussion group.

Locally, Port Authority General Manager Rory Respicio is under fire for initiating mediation talks with YTK in the ongoing multimillion-

dollar dispute, moving forward without board approval and allegedly making statements that didn't match up to the facts. Numerous people called for his resignation, including a member of the port's board of directors. Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero essentially did the same thing that happened in New York, but with a different tactic. She took control of the narrative, but unlike Ocasio-Cortez, she did so by not dealing directly with the public outcry against Respicio, issuing a mild statement of confidence. I'm sure we haven't heard the end of this situation but for now, unless there's something I don't understand, the governor owns the narrative because she holds the important cards.

Then I began thinking of how CEOs and other managers control thought in their organizations by controlling the narratives that drive major issues. It really is the same conversation. The person or entity that reframes the discussion and can successfully deliver their key points to all concerned, will likely influence the majority of people over to their point of view.

Public opinion always has been and always will be the true pot of gold that all leaders will look to harness. If you're a leader or will be someday, you'll do it, too. This is not going to change and don't misunderstand my purpose here. Controlling the narrative is not, in itself, a bad or sinister thing. It is necessary or we'd be in a perpetual state of total chaos. Leaders will always control the conversations. The only question is their motivation for doing so.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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